

Message Eleven

**The Gospel, God's Salvation,
and the Need for a Dispensational Transfer**

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:6-8; 8:12; 13:39; 14:3; 16:31; 20:24

- I. **The gospel preached in Acts is the complete gospel—the gospel of Jesus as the Christ (5:42), the word as the gospel (8:4), the gospel of the kingdom of God (v. 12), the gospel of the name of Jesus Christ (v. 12), the gospel of peace (10:36), the Lord Jesus as the gospel (8:35; 11:20), the gospel of the promise made to the fathers (13:32), Jesus and the resurrection as the gospel (17:18), and the gospel of the grace of God (20:24):**
 - A. We need to learn from Philip's preaching of the gospel in Acts 8:
 1. Philip preached Christ as the gospel, as the good news—vv. 5, 12, 35.
 2. Philip also preached the kingdom of God as the gospel just as the Lord Jesus had done—v. 12; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43.
 3. Like Philip, we should preach the gospel that is Jesus Christ and also the kingdom of God, preaching Jesus Christ as the kingdom of God—Acts 8:12.
 - B. The conversion of Saul shows that the name of Jesus itself is an adequate gospel—9:4-5.
 - C. In our gospel preaching, we should proclaim both the person of Christ and the work of Christ—vv. 20, 22.
 - D. The gospel preached by Peter comprises the divine blessings not only of forgiveness (5:31; 10:43) and salvation (2:21; 4:12) but also of the Spirit (2:38) and life; forgiveness deals with people's sins, and life, with people's death (John 5:24; 1 John 3:14; 2 Cor. 5:4).
 - E. In Athens Paul "was announcing Jesus and the resurrection as the gospel"—Acts 17:18:
 1. Paul's preaching was a strong indication that he had been constituted with the all-inclusive Jesus Christ and His resurrection—Phil. 3:10.
 2. Whether or not we have power in preaching the gospel depends on our being, our person; if we would have power in our preaching, we need to be constituted with the all-inclusive Christ, as Paul was—1 Cor. 2:2, 4-5.
- II. **According to the record in the book of Acts, God's salvation includes the Savior (13:23), repentance (5:31), faith (15:9),**

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forgiveness (13:38-39), justification (v. 39), and eternal life (v. 48):

- A. Redemption is what Christ accomplished on the cross, and salvation is the application of this accomplished redemption to us—Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Acts 4:12; 28:28; Rom. 1:16; 3:24; 10:10; 13:11; Heb. 2:3, 10; 5:9; 9:12.
- B. From David’s seed, God brought forth a Savior, Jesus; with Him there is salvation—Acts 13:23.
- C. As the Leader, the Ruler, and the Savior, the Lord is ruling the earth for the purpose of our salvation—5:31:
 - 1. The Lord Jesus is ruling so that we may be saved, and now the Savior Himself is our salvation—v. 31; 2:21, 40, 47; 8:37; 16:31; Luke 2:30; 19:9.
 - 2. As the Leader and Savior, He gives repentance and forgiveness of sins; His sovereign ruling causes and leads God’s chosen people to repent, and His salvation, which is based on His redemption, affords them forgiveness of sins—Acts 5:31:
 - a. Repentance is for forgiveness of sins—Luke 24:47:
 - 1) On God’s side, forgiveness of sins is based on the redemption of Christ, which was accomplished through His death—Acts 2:38; 10:43; Eph. 1:7.
 - 2) On man’s side, forgiveness of sins is through man’s repentance—Mark 1:4.
 - b. Forgiveness of sins is the initial and basic blessing of God’s full salvation; based on forgiveness, the blessing of God’s full salvation goes forward and consummates in the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit—Acts 2:38.
- D. We are saved by grace, which includes Christ’s person and redemptive work—15:11; 11:23; Rom. 3:24.
- E. “In this One everyone who believes is justified”—Acts 13:39:
 - 1. To be forgiven of sins is on the negative side (v. 38) and is for our release from condemnation; to be justified is on the positive side and is for our reconciliation to God and our being accepted by Him—Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:24-26, 28; 5:1, 11.
 - 2. “This One” in Acts 13:39 is the One who has been resurrected to be God’s firstborn Son, our Savior—v. 33.
 - 3. The One by whom we are forgiven and in whom we are justified is Himself our forgiveness and justification; the

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resurrected Christ is our forgiveness and justification—
vv. 33-34, 38-39.

- F. God's salvation is by faith, by believing, and in God's salvation we experience the cleansing of our hearts by faith; this cleansing is by the Holy Spirit with the divine life—8:37; 15:7, 9; 16:31.
- G. "As many as were appointed to eternal life believed"—13:48:
 - 1. One's rejecting the gospel is evidence that he is unworthy of eternal life (v. 46); one's believing is proof that he was appointed or ordained by God to eternal life—v. 48.
 - 2. God's ordination, or predestination, for man's salvation is sovereignly of Himself, but He still leaves man to his own free will; whether man would believe or reject His salvation is up to man's own decision—2 Thes. 2:13; Acts 8:37; 16:31.

III. The book of Acts portrays the need for a dispensational transfer in order to be brought fully into God's New Testament economy—1:6-8; 1 Tim. 1:4:

- A. *Dispensation* denotes the divine arrangement in God's eternal economy.
- B. Acts is not merely concerned with acts but with God's economy and God's arrangement in His economy—1:8; 9:15, 17.
- C. Acts is a dispensational book because it describes a great transfer that was to be accomplished during a time of transition—the transfer from the Old Testament economy to the New Testament economy—15:7-11:
 - 1. To speak of a dispensational transfer in Acts means that in this book we see the need for a great turn from the old dispensation to the new—14:1-3.
 - 2. In Acts we can see God's move for His New Testament economy and all the crucial dispensational turning points related to this move—1:6-8; 10:45.
- D. The old dispensation was the dispensation of the law and of the temple, and the new dispensation is the dispensation of Christ as the law of life and as the living temple; between these two dispensations there was a transitional period in which God was transferring His chosen people from the old dispensation into the new—6:14; 7:48-49; Rom. 8:2; Eph. 2:21-22.
- E. God in His New Testament economy had delivered and separated the Jewish believers in Christ from the Jewish nation;

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thus, the Jewish believers, as the church of God, should be as distinct and separate from the Jews as from the Gentiles—Acts 2:40; 1 Cor. 10:32.

- F. According to Luke's narration in Acts, the church among the Jews, including the early apostles, did not pass through this transition successfully due to the influence of their Judaic background—11:1-2, 17-18; 15:1-2, 13-21.
- G. James, the elders in Jerusalem, and thousands of Jewish believers still remained in a mixture of the Christian faith with the Mosaic law—21:18-26:
 - 1. They were not aware that the dispensation of the law was over and that the dispensation of grace should be fully honored, and that any disregard of the distinction between these two dispensations would be contrary to God's economical plan for the building up of the church as the expression of Christ—Rom. 10:4; Gal. 2:16, 21; 3:23-29.
 - 2. The Jewish believers in Jerusalem had formed a religious mixture of God's New Testament economy with the Old Testament dispensation and even insisted on putting together both faith in Christ and the out-of-date things of the Old Testament—Acts 21:18-26.
 - 3. This mixture was not only erroneous but also abominable in the eyes of God, who left the church in Jerusalem as it was until the devastating mixture was terminated with the destruction of Jerusalem—Matt. 22:7.
- H. The Lord carried out a complete dispensational transfer with Paul; in four crucial Epistles concerning this transfer—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Hebrews—there is no ground remaining for any kind of mixture; there is room only for Christ—Eph. 3:14-21; Phil. 3:1-11; Col. 3:10-11; Heb. 8:6-13.
- I. We need to know God's New Testament economy and have a dispensational transfer—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 1:10; 3:8-11:
 - 1. God's intention is to propagate the resurrected Christ by imparting Him into us so that we may become His living members saturated with Him and constituted of Him in order that Christ may have a Body on earth for His expression; then He will bring His kingdom in, and following that there will be the ultimate consummation of God's New Testament economy—Acts 4:33; Eph. 3:14-17a; 4:16; Rev. 11:15; 21:1-2.

2. We need to see the vision of God's eternal economy and have a dispensational transfer so that we may live a life fully according to and for God's New Testament economy—Prov. 29:18a; Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 18, 25.
3. The way to keep ourselves in this dispensational transfer is to remain faithful to the vision of God's New Testament economy—Acts 26:19.